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INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SS-07 /012 R

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DRAFTED BY: NEA: WSBUTCHER

APPROVED BY NEA: WSTUTCHER

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R 200111 Z APR 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

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S E C R E T STATE 074529

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AMMAN LONDON BEIRUT KHARTOUM MOGADISCIO TEL AVIV FROM SANAA
16 APR 73 RPT TO YOU QUOTE

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E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, MASS, EAID, ET, YE, YS, SU, UR, IS

SUBJ: CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT AL- IRYANI

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY SISCO

REF: ADDIS 4021 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: IN APRIL 12 CALL ON YAR PRESIDENT ABD
AL- RAHMAN AL- IRYANI, AMBASSADOR AND AAO RUIZ SUMMARIZED
FORTHCOMING USAID PROGRAM. STATUS OF USG SUPPORT FOR
EMERGENCY AND LONGER TERM MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO YARG
WAS REVIEWED. CURRENT RELATIONS BETWEEN YAR, ETHIOPIA
AND SUDAN WERE EXAMINED. PRESIDENT EXPRESSED KEEN
INTEREST IN AN EARLY RESOLUTION OF RED SEA ISLANDS
SOVEREIGNTY PROMLE M , THROUGH FRIENDLY DISCUSSION WITH
IEG. END SUMMARY

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1. ACCOMPANIED BY AAO RUIZ, I CALLED ON PRESIDENT
AL- IRYANI IN TAIZ EVENING APRIL 12 FOLLOWING RETURN
SAME DAY FROM ETHIOPIA.

2. AT PRESIDENT'S REQUEST, RUIZ SUMMARIZED PRINCIPAL ELEMENTS OF USAID PROGRAM IN YAR AS AGREED AND NOW ABOUT TO BE IMPLEMENTED. PRESIDENT STRESSED CRITICAL IMPORTANCE OF US ASSISTANCE IN MEETING ACUTE WATER PROBLEMS IN NORTHERN PORTION OF COUNTRY BROUGHT ABOUT BY PROLONGED DROUGHT. HE WELCOMED RETURN OF RUIZ IN WHOM HE SAID YARG AND YEMENIS HAD TRUST AND CONFIDENCE.

3. I REFERRED TO FLARE-UP OF CONCERN ABOUT POSSIBLE PDRY ATTACK WHICH HAD ARISEN DURING MY ABSENCE. I NOTED THAT THANKS TO PRESIDENT AL-IRYANI'S PROMPT RECOURSE TO DIPLOMACY WITH PDRY, SENSE OF ACUTENESS AND IMMEDIACY SEEMED TO HAVE BEEN DISSIPATED. NEVERTHELESS, I KNEW YARG CONTINUED TO FEEL ITS VULNERABILITY BECAUSE OF INADEQUATE DEFENSES AND REMAINED CONCERNED TO BRING ABOUT BOTH IMMEDIATE AND LONGER TERM IMPROVEMENTS IN ITS MILITARY POSTURE. REGARDING FORMER, AND AS ANTICIPATED IN CHARGE NEWTON'S REMARKS TO PRESIDENT ON APRIL 3, USG FOLLOWING UP PROMPTLY AND DECISIVELY IN DISCUSSIONS WITH SAG ON WAYS IN WHICH TO REMEDY, AT LEAST IN PART, YARG'S MOST CRITICAL DEFICIENCIES. PRESIDENT EXPRESSED APPRECIATION SAYING HE HOPED USG WOULD CONTINUE URGE SAG ACT EXPEDITIOUSLY AS LATTER'S RESPONSE TO DATE LEFT MUCH TO BE DESIRED. I ASSURED HIM WE WOULD CONTINUE SUPPORT PROMPT ASSISTANCE BY SAG BUT PRIMARY CHANNEL HAD TO BE THAT OF DIRECT DISCUSSION BETWEEN YARG AND SAG.

4. PRESIDENT ASKED HOW MY TRIP TO ETHIOPIA HAD GONE. I SAID I HOPED IT HAD BEEN USEFUL IN ADVANCING AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT WE SEE TAKING PLACE IN SOUTHERN RED SEA. SOVIET ACTIVITY ON OPPOSITE SHORES OF THE SOUTHERN RED SEA IS A SINGLE PHENOMENON, RESPONSES TO WHICH SHOULD BE COORDINATED TO GREATER DEGREE THAN HAS BEEN CASE HERETOFORE. YAR'S PROBLEM WITH PDRY MIRRORS ETHIOPIA'S PROBLEM WITH SOMALIA. IN PUTTING SOPHISTICATED OFFENSIVE WEAPONRY INTO HANDS OF RADICAL
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REGIMES IN ADEN AND MOGADISCIO, SOVIETS HAVE A CLEAR, COORDINATED AND SINGLE OBJECTIVE : GAINING ULTIMATE CONTROL OVER BAB AL MANDAB STRAITS, AN HISTORICAL OBJECTIVE OF RUSSIAN STATE. IN COUNTERING THE REALIZATION OF THIS OBJECTIVE, IT IS IN INTERETS OF MODERATE RED SEA STATES, ETHIOPIA, YEMEN, SAUDI ARABIA AND SUDAN TO BEGIN DISCREETLY TO WORK MORE CLOSELY TOGETHER. MY CONVERSATIONS IN ETHIOPIA HAD SHOWN THAT IEG AWARE OF THIS IMPERATIVE AND, UNDER STIMULUS OF EMPEROR'S PERSONAL INTEREST, RECIPROCATES DESIRE OF

YARG AND PRESIDENT AL- IRYANI (AS EXPRESSED TO ME IN MARCH 22 CONVERSATION, SANAA 472) FOR CLOSER, MORE EFFECTIVE TIES.

5. PRESIDENT ASKED IF I COULD TELL HIM ANYTHING ON IEG ATTITUDE TOWARD RESOLUTION OF RED SEA ISLANDS SOVEREIGNTY PROBLEM WHICH, HE SAID, YARG SEEKS THROUGH EARLY, FRIENDLY DISCUSSION. I REPLIED THAT I HAD RAISED THIS WITH IEG FOREIGN MINISTER DR. MINASSIE (REFTEL). HE HAD ASSURED ME OF ETHIOPIA' S WISH TO RESOLVE THIS THROUGH NEGOTIATION AS PROMPTLY AS POSSIBLE. ETHIOPIA, HE HAD STATED, VIEWED SITUATION AS DID YARG: IT DID NOT INTEND TO BE ACQUISITIVE. IEG HAD FORMED INTER- MINISTERIAL STUDY GROUP TO EXAMINE HISTORY OF ISLANDS AND EXPECTED TO BE BACK IN TOUCH WITH YARG AFTER ITS WORK COMPLETED. FRANKLY SPEAKING, IT WAS MY PERSONAL IMPRESSION THAT IEG HAD NO CLEARER IDEAS ABOUT HISTORY OF THESE INSIGNIFICANT, LARGELY UNINHABITED ISLANDS THAN DID YARG. ESSENTIAL WAS THAT BOTH PARTIES SHOULD APPROACH PROBLEM IN CONTEXT THEIR LARGER AND ACKNOWLEDGED INTEREST IN A RELATIONSHIP OF DEEPENING COOPERATION. WHILE WE HAD PERHAPS HAD LIMITED USEFUL ROLE IN LAYING GROUNDWORK FOR DISCUSSION BETWEEN IEG AND YARG, USG DID NOT OTHERWISE INTEND INVOLVE ITSELF IN THIS QUESTION WHICH A MATTER FOR DIRECT NEGOTIATION BETWEEN OUR TWO FRIENDS.

6. PRESIDENT SAID HE UNDERSTOOD AND APPRECIATED USG ATTITUDE AND INTEREST. HE ONLY HOPED IEG WOULD REPLY SOON AND POSITIVELY TO YARG REQUEST FOR INITIATION OF NEGOTIATION. PRESIDENT SAID HE HAD RECENTLY BEEN VISITED BY PDRY INFORMATION MINISTER ABDULLAH KHAMIRI
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WHO HAS BEEN TRYING TO STIR UP TROUBLE FOR YAR IN HIS TRAVELS TO OTHER ARAB CAPITAL S. KHAMIRI HAD SUGGESTED YAR JOIN PDRY IN SOME MILITARY INITIATIVE TO SEIZE UNINHABITED ISLANDS, WHETHER OR NOT CLAIMED BY ETHIOPIA, TO PREVENT THEIR USE BY ISRAEL. PRESIDENT SAID HE HAD TOLD KHAMIRI TO LAY OFF: YARG HAD RECONNOITERED PRINCIPAL ISLAND CLAIMED BY IT AND FOUND NO ISRAELIS. YARG INTENDED WORK THIS OUT QUIETLY AND CALMLY WITH ETHIOPIA IN A WAY THAT WOULD SAFE- GUARD ARAB INTERESTS.

7. I NOTED THAT MY TRIP TO ETHIOPIA HAD COINCIDENTALLY PROVIDED OPPORTUNITY FOR DISCUSSION WITH A RESPONSIBLE SUDANESE OFFICIAL (SUDAN' S KNOWLEDGEABLE CONGEN IN ASMARA) REGARDING SUDAN' S RELATIONSHIP WITH YAR. I HAD BEEN PLEASED TO LEARN THAT SUDAN RECIPROCATES YARG' S SENSE THAT THESE TWO COUNTRIES HAVE COMMON

INTERESTS WHICH SHOULD CAUSE THEM DRAW CLOSER TOGETHER AS PART OF AN INFORMAL RED SEA ASSOCIATION OF LIKE-MINDED MODERATE STATES. SUDAN EVIDENTLY CONSIDERING ESTABLISHMENT OF AN EMBASSY IN SANAA, A MOVE ABOUT WHICH IT HAS HITHERTO HAD SOME HESITANCY IN FEAR OF APPEARING TO PREJUDICE UNITY MOVES BETWEEN THE TWO YEMEN S. I HAD BEEN TOLD THAT " SUDAN COULD NOT SAY NO" SHOULD YARG IN DUE COURSE SEEK SOME FORM OF LIMITED SUDANESE MILITARY TRAINING ASSISTANCE THROUGH PROVISION OF SOME CONTRACT OFFICERS AND NON- COMS.

8. PRESIDENT AL- IRYANI SAID YARG FEELS THAT TIES WITH SUDAN SHOULD BE EXPANDED. AS ACTIVITY OF SUDANESE FINANCE MISSION UNDER IBRD HAS SHOWN, SUDANESE ARE INTELLIGENT AND CAN MAKE AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION IN YEMEN. ESTABLISHMENT OF SUDANESE EMBASSY IN SANAA LOGICAL AND DESIRABLE IN VIEW PRESENCE OF YAR EMBASSY IN SUDAN. YAR WILL BE FOLLOWING UP THESE LEADS. CRAWFORD

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 07 MAY 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 APR 1973
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973STATE074529
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: NEA: WSBUTCHER
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730460/abqcemlg.tel
Line Count: 185
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN NEA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: ADDIS 4021 (NOTAL)
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 DEC 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18-Dec-2001 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <08-Jan-2002 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> jms 980128
Subject: CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT AL- IRYANI
TAGS: EAID, MARR, MASS, PFOR, ET, IS, SU, UR, YE, YS
To: NEW DELHI
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005